DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 071 538 FL 003 963

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TITLE Toward a Systems Approach in the Preparation of Spanish Teachers.
PUB DATE 29 Dec 72
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, New York, N.Y., December 29, 1972

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Curriculum Planning; Educational Objectives; Instructional Improvement; Language Instruction; *Language Teachers; Secondary School Teachers; Second Language Learning; *Second Languages; *Spanish; *Systems Analysis; *Teacher Education; Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

This paper outlines and discusses the nature of the systems approach to teacher education in foreign languages. The following topics are discussed: (1) purpose of the system, (2) content of the teacher preparation program, (3) development of objectives, (4) academic foundations-objectives, (5) foreign language-culture, (6) systems approach process, (7) analysis of learning tasks, (8) need for national direction and local implementation, (9) system design, (10) implementation, and (11) feedback. Three illustrations are included concerning foreign language teacher preparation as a system, components and domains of learning, and a flow chart of a systems model for Spanish teacher preparation. (RL)

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TOWARD A SYSTEMS APPROACH IN THE PREPARATION OF SPANISH TEACHERS

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To relate some of the developments which one of the foremost figures in the application of a system approach in foreign language education, Bela Banathy, defines a system as "deliberately designed entities, comprised of parts, which are interrelated and designed to interact in order to attain predetermined purposes."[1] Thus a systems approach to teacher preparation involves entities such as the college department of foreign languages and literatures, the college of education, the state department of education, the professional societies (State and local), the high schools and/or elementary schools, each cooperating in such a way so as to attain their predetermined purpose--the preparation of a teacher able to teach foreign languages effectively or to use today's jargon, "able to manage learning" in such a way as to induce students to learn foreign languages. The term "system" has been employed since World War II when industries became increasingly concerned with research and development in the production of new products and improvement of existing ones. It is possible, although often objectionable to some, to compare the undergraduate students in the teacher preparation system as new products which can be molded into an adequate product and in-service teachers as an example of an existing product in need of improvement. We may not like to think of the college or university as a system, but we have all heard of "the diploma mill" and students do perceive the college or university as some system which they must enter, be ground around in, and pushed out the other end--a raw product refined by the system, churned around and dropped into

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society and the foreign language class, hopefully prepared to do a job. As Banathy has pointed out, "education is product oriented, its products being the educated man and the knowledge produced through research."[2]

Education can therefore be conceived of as a system. Students come from society (and the home) into elementary education, and/or teacher training, through graduate education, and then may be turned back into society, for action for the first time. All other options for leaving education and returning to the outside world full time are possible, with the return possibility at any level also available. Education as a system functions within the realm of society. On the other hand, education is composed of smaller elements or subsystems such as elementary education, secondary education, teacher training, college or university education and adult or advanced professional education. Educated citizens represent the output of the educational system. The system of education and each individual subsystem receive a feedback of information concerning their product in the form of success or failure of the learner in their society situation.

One could also conceive the preparation of foreign language teachers as a system. Using Spanish teacher training as our system, subsystems would include teacher training for elementary school Spanish teachers, for secondary school Spanish teachers, for college and university Spanish teachers, for graduate school Spanish teachers, and for Spanish teachers of adults (Illustration 1). The suprasystem of Spanish teacher training as a system would be teacher preparation in general.

Purpose of the System

The purpose of the system is to prepare the teacher of Spanish let us say, for the secondary school, since this is where the majority of our customers begin their professional career. The need is for a system designed to produce

this type of individual with a job description delineating the desired teacher behavior required both in and out of the classroom, to function adequately in this capacity.

Content

What content is required in a Spanish teacher preparation program planned especially for teachers of Spanish? Since a systems approach will ultimately produce a teacher whose performance will be evaluated in terms of overt teacher behavior, the question of content requires that an answer be given in terms of what the Spanish teacher can do. Presently, three major components of a teacher preparation program are generally recognized: 1) the Academic Foundations, 2) the Foreign Language Component, and 3) the Professional Preparation Component. The Academic Foundations generally include courses such as English, History, Mathematics and Science taken in the first few years of college. The Foreign Language component refers to courses taken in the foreign language department. The Professional Preparation Component refers to courses taken in the education department such as educational psychology, curriculum organization, the methods courses (which may be taught in foreign languages), and student teaching.

In a 1955 issue of the PMLA,[3] a statement of guidelines for Secondary School teachers of foreign languages was issued by the MLA dividing areas of needed competence into seven areas reflected later in the MLA Proficiency Examination for Teachers and Advanced Students. The first four sections referred to language skills--listening, speaking, reading, writing. The last three sections deal with applied linguistics, culture, and professional preparation. As viewed by the MLA, professional preparation meant a knowledge of methodology, particularly the audio-lingual method. Today's situation requires a broader view of the area of professional preparation enabling the

teacher to function in the total educational context including parent-teacher relations, teacher-administration relations, teacher-teacher relations, and a broader range of activities to suit the eclectic approach prevalent in today's literature and in practice, as was always the situation.

At this point, it may be necessary to point out that most of the content in today's teacher-training programs is arbitrarily determined by individual professors within the framework of designated courses required for certification. Although general objectives and testing procedures are in most cases left to the instructors.

In a systems approach to Spanish teacher preparation, however, desired objectives written in performance terms will be predetermined based on the job analysis of Spanish teachers. The ordering of a curriculum based on these criteria would not necessarily reflect the lock-step course sequence which exists in colleges and universities today. Mini-courses or modules developed to accomplish specific objectives could be selected by the student or assigned to him based on his needs. The student would be aware at all times of his progress toward specific goals.

Developments of Objectives

In order to develop guidelines for the formulation of objectives for the training of the Spanish specialist, it is advantageous not only to imploy the three areas of components in which learning is to take place, but also the type of learning or the type of performance involved. The three domains of learning identified by Benjamin Bloom and associates[4] are helpful in developing the format. The three domains of learning--cognitive, affective, and psychomotor correspond to what a Spanish specialist must know, feel and be able to do. The matrix provided (Illustration 2) here gives some major areas in which investigation is needed.

Let me cite some examples in different areas in order to illustrate the direction developmental research needs to follow to put this plan into operation:

ACADEMIC FOUNDATIONS - COGNITIVE

Generally in these areas, a prospective candidate for teaching Spanish works in the areas of English language development, gains an historical perspective through courses in world history, or develops skills and competencies in mathematical computation depending on the structure of the academic foundations at the university. Thus a goal indicator under ACADEMIC FOUNDATIONS - Cognitive might be:

> To develop a perspective of history which enables the teacher of Spanish to view how the teaching of Spanish has fit into the curriculum in the United States.

Particular points of attainment could be determined and worked into a LAP for this particular phase of instruction. The potential teacher could read the objective and best determine how to attain it since suggestions for gaining the knowledge would be offered in the LAP. Certain courses on a semester, a tri-semester, or quarterly basis, or mini-courses could be made available on an alternating basis, so that students could pick and choose. Specific readings in the history of education, the history of foreign language teaching, or other sources could be made available in a learning center to facilitate the progress of the student toward obtaining the objectives.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE - CULTURE - Cognitive

It would be possible to apply Howard Nostrand's "Emergent Model" to the development of performance objectives in all three domains of our model.[5]

Nostrand divides the model into five groups: the culture, the society, the cross-cultural environment, the ecology, and the Individual. Using the Culture as an example, Nostrand talks about the culture's value system and

the tensions within it. He identifies these areas as individual features rather than societal features of the French:

1. The art of living
2. Intellectuality
3. Individualism and civil liberty
4. Realism and good sense
5. Law and order
6. Friendship
7. Love
8. Family
9. Religion
10. Community
11. Patriotism
12. Distributive justice (humanitarian spirit)

These could be used as goal indicators in a system of teacher preparation. Specific objectives could be developed which might be used as measurements for determining if prospective teachers had the cognitive knowledge for handling this material. The affective domain (CULTURE - Affective) would involve internalizing this material, and skills (CULTURE - Psychomotor) would involve body language which would reflect this information and these feelings.

As additional information is gathered concerning the behaviors necessary for successful performance in the Spanish classroom, areas of overlapping can be identified and the categories and goals may be streamlined. At this stage of development, however, these areas seem to be lucrative for additional investigation.

Process

A flow chart describing the systems model for FLES teacher preparation is indicated in Illustration 3. The five stages involved in the development and implementation of the system are 1) Formulation of Objectives for Spanish teacher preparation which has just been discussed, 2) the Analysis of the Learning Tasks for Potential Spanish specialists, 3) the system design, 4) the implementation of the system, and 5) the feedback.

Analysis of Learning Tasks

Once the objectives for the program have been determined, the potential Spanish teacher enters the system. He may be a native speaker of Spanish from Colombia with little knowledge of the American educational system or he may be a first year college student with little knowledge of Spanish. The entrant could be an experienced French teacher who possesses many of the teaching skills needed by the Spanish teacher but with needs in language development. At the analysis stage of entry, each applicant is evaluated in terms of what he is capable of doing at the time. The learning tasks for each student are determined by comparing those possessed and capable of being demonstrated versus the formulated objectives.

Need for National Direction and Local Implementation

At this stage, it is important to try to give some guidelines for implementation of this type of program. Obviously, it is impossible to expect to need the same kinds of teachers for all programs across the country. The type of instruction needed in bilingual programs in the Southwest does not equate with what is needed in inner city schools in other parts of the country. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify national guidelines or goal indicators which could be determined by national organizations such as the AATSP. These guidelines could be then locally adapted to vary with each state or regional organization. There are movements nationally at the present time in the area of Performance Based Teacher Education (PBTE) which provide the framework for this kind of development and research. In Florida, a team is working at the state level to implement this kind of program. In Texas, each new Teacher Education Program developed from now on must be performanced based. By 1976, it is hoped that a team of educators from various areas (state department of education, university programs, professional organizations, and schools) will

be working together to produce performance standards in many areas of teacher preparation. Even such small states as South Carolina have called in teams of experts to alert their teacher educators to the impending concern for defining teacher education in performance terms.

Performance Based Teacher Education relates of course to the term accountability which has become so much of concern in the last few years. Some of the advantages to this approach are the following: 1) planned outcomes - one can feel reasonably confident that the person leaving the teacher education program will have greater success in the field since his areas of success will have been demonstrated; 2) relevance - what has been done in the program has direct bearing on what the student expects to do and that relevance has been pointed out to him. Hopefully this will make learning more meaningful to him; 3) motivation - the teacher candidate would hopefully be better motivated since he has some choice in the type of path he follows and the means for obtaining the objectives. Hopefully he would have some choice in the establishment of the objectives for the PBTE program. New teachers entering a school situation are often the best ones to have discuss their immediate problems and to discuss how elements of their training program assisted them. Bessie McAndrew's Master's Thesis[6] at the University of Texas in 1970 evaluated the Teacher Preparation Program at the University of Texas and could be a means for developing feedback in new programs. 4) Involvement - the director of the methods course of the teacher education program ceases to become a dispenser of knowledge since the students will be directly involved in obtaining their competence.

Dr. Leon Lessinger, considered by some to be the 'father of accountability,' and presently Dean of the College of Education at the University of South Carolina, discusses "teaching as a performing art."[7] He feels that we have

looked at teaching through the eyss of social scientists and psychologists particularly over the past fifty years and feels we might gain something of value by looking at teaching from the standpoint of a performing artist. We do arrive at some interesting observations from this viewpoint. Consider the involvement factor alone. What actor deriving his effectiveness from the interaction between himself and the audience would fail to involve himself in the acting situation until the semester before he is asked to take over a major role as happens when a graduating senior takes student teaching in his senior year for six weeks to a semester only to be taking a full time job teaching three months after completion of this activity? An actor would certainly want more involvement than that and surely would have had it. Most prospective teachers have little involvement in the teaching process. Could we not involve our teaching majors in the teaching operation of our basic courses at the university level to a greater extent? If we have program in self-pacing at the University, could we not permit our teaching majors to become involved in the instructional procedures? Would this not make Spanish 311 "Spanish Grammar and Syntax" more relevant? Would this not provide a greater motivation for the student who has never been questioned about what he knows and does not know? Does he have to wait until student teaching to be faced by near-peers (in age) to find that he has a lot of reviewing to do? Would this not assist him in helping him to plan his own outcomes?

System Design

Once the regional or state area has set up its specifications for the objectives for the program, analysed the needs of the potential teacher entering the system, it is time to determine the system design. The measures necessary to remedy deficiencies are analysed and ordered based on availability of personnel, materials, room space, inter-university visitation (in small

schools particularly), on the secondary school visitation, and/or internship, or other arrangements which will assist in maintaining needed objectives. The institution best suited for this type of preparation is a large university setting in which a number of disciplines are readily available such as linguistics departments, psychology departments, etc. to supply resource personnel for student access. Smaller colleges are limited in some respects when it comes to providing the personnel for this type of programming. On the other hand, the sheer number of applicants to be handled and counseled at a large university makes the task there difficult. The System Design considers as its outstanding feature the most beneficial arrangement of who, what, how, when, and where.

Implementation

Once the system has been designed, the next step is to implement it with the potential Spanish teacher. The procedures outlined in the system design are carried out. After learning has taken place, further analysis of the result will reveal progress toward the performance goals in mind and about the validity of the objectives initially formulated.

Feedback

By virtue of feedback the total integration of the system is guaranteed. The analysis of teacher performance during the implementation stage provides information which is utilized in restructuring of the objectives of the system. Viable research of outcomes and performances of students will be necessary before performance based teacher education can be lifted before such research is available, if ever. But based on research we are now involved in with performance objectives in basic language classes, I would predict some of these things would happen in Spanish teacher education programs if performance criteria were implemented in colleges and universities:

1) There would be less student complaint about the content of courses in

education and/or methodology because students would know what is expected of them and less would be left to the whim of the individual progressors who wish to "do their thing" which may or may not be related to the goals involved. 2) There would be less duplication from course to course leading to more satisfied customers. How to develop a lesson plan would no longer be developed in general curriculum and student teaching. 3) Students would become more independent and capable of assuming responsibility. How we relish the student or student teacher who can take a problem and given a few directions can attack the problem and solve it without having to be spoon-fed! These characteristics, which are so essential to successful first-year teachers are seldom developed in many undergraduate programs today where students are so dependent on professors. I can recall an MAT candidate who when asked on her oral exam what she garnered from a course in 20th century Latin American Poetry she responded: "Not much. Because the books never came in and we never did anything but listen to our professor reading all the time." If her own students said such things in her secondary class, she would probably scream. We need to develop responsibility in our students. 4) Students would have a more realistic evaluation of their capabilities earlier in the program and would have more time to develop their potential as teachers.

Working models of this type are important because:

1) It would help each teacher identify his style of teaching.

2) It would increase teacher flexibility for different educational structures. A teacher prepared to do a variety of methods could serve better in different situations and would not feel locked to the method he has experienced or had student-taught with.

3) It would provide diagnostic possibilities for the teacher trainer. As it is now, the student teacher gets in a situation in a school before problems

are identified leaving the teacher trainer with little to do but hope she can weather the storm and still be salvaged as a teacher.

4) It provides the prospective teacher with different tracks. Some might finish in two years while others may require additional time.

5) If different standards with a system were established, it might promote a master teacher concept to be differentiated from an intern, a teacher assistant, or a teacher aide.

6) It might help us focus better on many problems facing outgoing teachers today such as urban problems, bilingual education, and others.[8]

This is not to say that we are not doing a lot of things better than we were ten years ago. As John Dusel[9] pointed out recently: 1) the foreign language teaching major of today controls the language much better than his counterpart a few years ago; 2) he may have been exposed to some related theory such as the linguistic theory of foreign language teaching; 3) he may have studied and practiced methods of foreign language teaching; 4) he has had a greater chance of having a foreign language teacher for his methods course; 5) he may have had training in the use of electronic aids; 6) he is more conscious of foreign culture and foreign values.

These are only generalizations--across the board looks at what we are doing. Can we scratch a little bit deeper and see what we are really like inside? If we can do this, we are in a better position to help those potential teachers who seek our assistance and direction not our letter grades ....

FOOTNOTES

[1]Bela Banathy, "The Design of Foreign Language Teacher Education," Modern Language Journal 52 (1968), 490.

[2]Bela Banathy, Instructional Systems (Palo Alto, Calif.: Fearon, 1968), p. 17.

[3]MLA, "Qualifications for Secondary School Teachers of Modern Foreign Languages," PMLA 70 (1955), 46-49.

[4]Benjamin Bloom, et. al., Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Handbook I: Cognitive Domain (New York: David McKay, 1956).

[5]Howard Nostrand, "The 'Emergent Model'," Mimeography, University of Washington, October 1972.

[6]Elizabeth D. McAndrews, An Analysis and Evaluation of The Program Leading to Teacher Certification in Spanish (M.A. Thesis, University of Texas, 1970).

[7]Leon Lessinger, "Teaching as a Performing Art," Mimeography, University of South Carolina, 1972.

[8]Mario D. Fantini, "The Reform of Teacher Education: A Proposal for New York State," Phi Delta Kappan 53 (1972), 482.

[9]John Dusel, "Foreign Language Teacher Education in 1971, A Position Paper," Forum (California) 19, iv (1972,) 4-7.

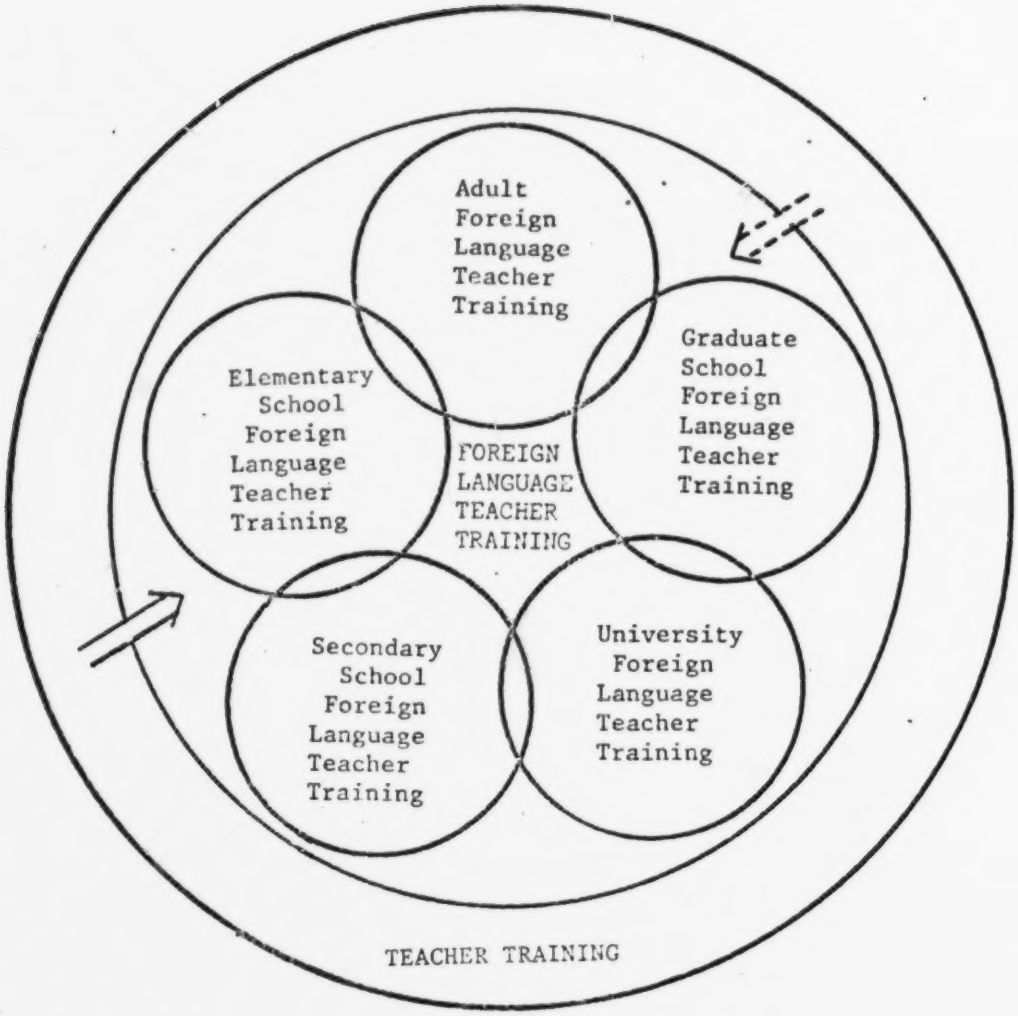

Illustration 1. Foreign Language Teacher Preparation as a System

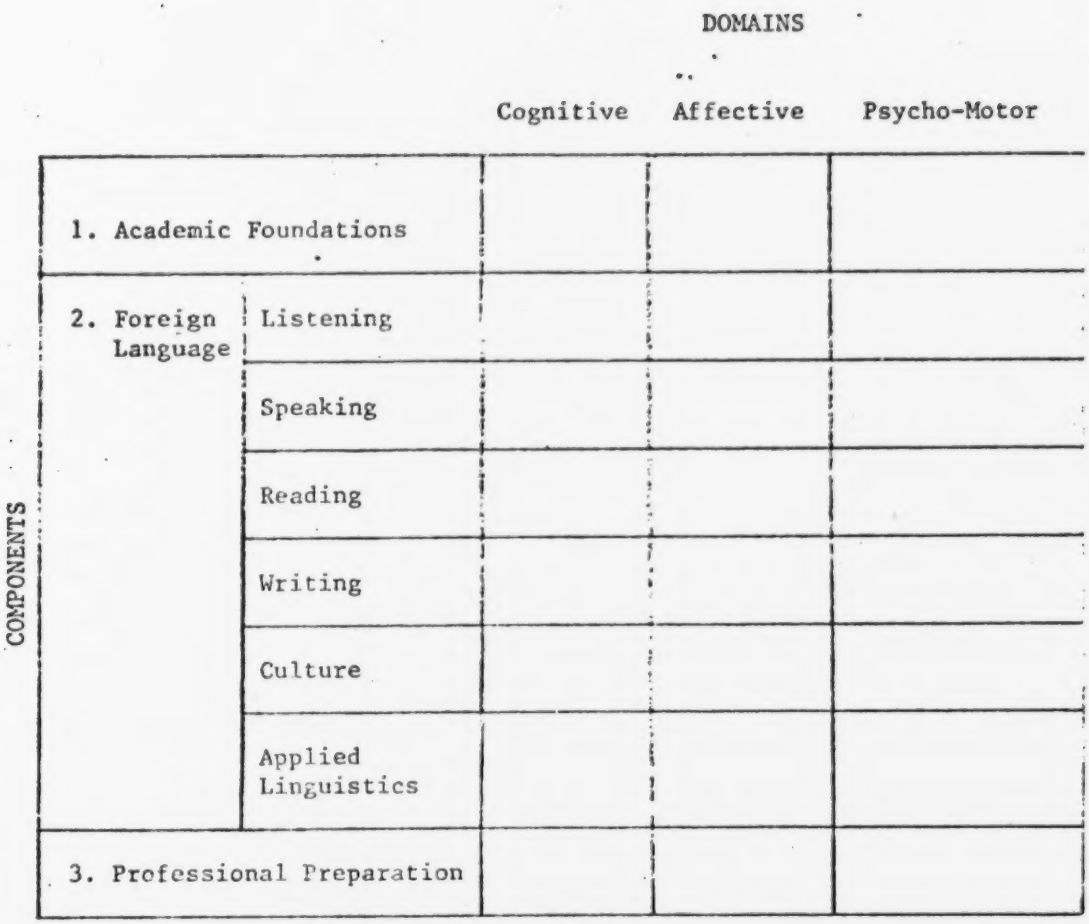

Illustration 2. Components and Domains of Learning

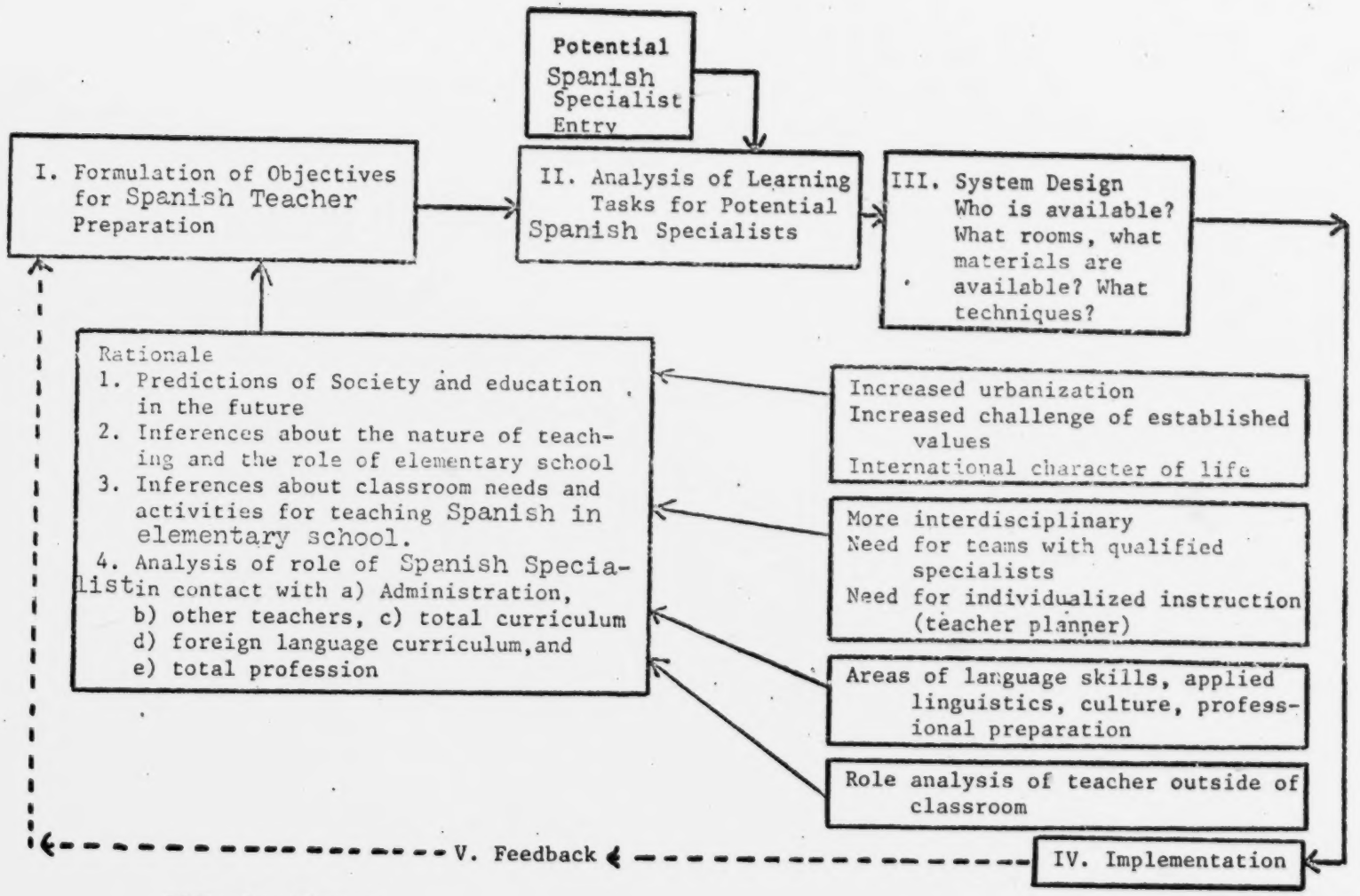
Potential Spanish Specialist Entry
I. Formulation of Objectives for Spanish Teacher Preparation
II. Analysis of Learning Tasks for Potential Spanish Specialists
III. System Design
Who is available? What rooms, what materials are available? What techniques?
Rationale
1. Predictions of Society and education in the future
2. Inferences about the nature of teaching and the role of elementary school
3. Inferences about classroom needs and activities for teaching Spanish in elementary school.
4. Analysis of role of Spanish Specialist in contact with a) Administration, b) other teachers, c) total curriculum d) foreign language curriculum, and e) total profession
Increased urbanization
Increased challenge of established values
International character of life
More interdisciplinary
Need for teams with qualified specialists
Need for individualized instruction (teacher planner)
Areas of language skills, applied linguistics, culture, professional preparation
Role analysis of teacher outside of classroom
V. Feedback
IV. Implementation

Illustration 3.
Flow Chart of Systems Model for Spanish Teacher Preparation